

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An isolated or purified nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding CaEss1, or having at least 70% homology thereto.
2. The isolated or purified nucleic acid molecule of claim 1 comprising the nucleotide sequence set forth in Figure 1 (SEQ ID NO:1), or at least 70% homology thereto.
3. An isolated or purified polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence having the enzymatic activity of CaEss1, or at least 70% homology thereto.
4. The isolated or purified polypeptide of claim 3 comprising the amino acid sequence set forth in Figure 1 (SEQ ID NO:2).
5. A primer or probe which specifically hybridizes to the nucleic acid molecule of claim 1 or 2.
6. The primer or probe of claim 5 comprising OW-216 or OW-221 (SEQ ID NOS: 3, 6).
7. A method for detecting *Candida albicans* in a sample comprising detecting the presence therein of a nucleic acid molecule of claim 1 or 2.
8. A method for detecting *Candida albicans* in a sample comprising detecting the presence therein of a polypeptide of claim 3 or 4 or of an antibody which binds to such a polypeptide.
9. An antibody which binds to the polypeptide of claim 3 or 4.
10. A diagnostic composition comprising the polypeptide of claim 9.
11. A diagnostic composition comprising the nucleic acid molecule of claim 1 or 2.

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12. A diagnostic composition comprising the primer or probe of claim 5.
13. A diagnostic composition comprising the primer or probe of claim 6.
14. A compound which inhibits *Candida albicans* by inhibiting CaEss1 or *CaESS1*.
- 5 15. The compound of claim 14 comprising an antibody which binds to CaEss1.
16. The compound of claim 14 which selectively inhibits growth of yeast transformed to contain and express *CaESS1* and/or *PIN1* and not an endogenous *ESS1*, when *CaESS1* is expressed but not when *PIN1* is expressed.
- 10 17. An antiproliferative compound which selectively inhibits growth of yeast transformed to contain and express *PIN1* and not an endogenous *ESS1*, and this inhibition can be overcome by high levels of *PIN1* expression.
- 15 18. A method for preventing or treating *Candida albicans* comprising administering a compound as claimed in any of claims 14, 15 or 16.
19. A method for preventing human cell growth comprising administering a compound as claimed in claim 17.
20. A vector comprising the nucleic acid molecule of claim 1 or 2.
- 20 21. A method for preparing CaEss1 comprising transforming a vector to contain the isolated nucleic acid molecule of claim 1 or 2 and obtaining expression thereof.
22. The method of claim 21 wherein the vector is a yeast.
23. A method for obtaining an isolated nucleic acid molecule encoding CaEss1 comprising performing a polymerase chain reaction on a
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